

July 28, 2023

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott,

We greatly appreciate the bipartisan work of the Committee in the fight against global hunger. U.S. international food security programs save lives in times of emergency and address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, building resilience within communities to withstand future shocks and stressors. Beyond emergency assistance, these programs build local agricultural markets that eventually enable recipient countries to become strong trading partners with the United States.

As you know, we have been facing an unprecedented global food crisis over the last several years. Whether it is due to conflict, climate-related extreme weather events or the lingering global economic turmoil, millions of people around the world are facing hunger and malnutrition. The World Food Programme reports a record 349 million people across 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity – up from 287 million in 2021. This constitutes a staggering rise of 200 million people compared to pre-pandemic levels.

It is because of these ongoing threats that we urge you to protect and strengthen the following international food and nutrition programs in the upcoming Farm Bill:

Title II – Food for Peace

USAID’s Food for Peace (FFP) Program seeks a world free of hunger and poverty, where people live in dignity, peace, and security.

By supporting the world's most vulnerable, FFP builds a more stable world and ensures that people have the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives. **We support robust funding annually to provide emergency and long-term food assistance programming.**

In addition to emergency funding, FFP Title II authorizes non-emergency programs, called Resilience Food Security Activities, to reduce poverty, malnutrition, and food insecurity through a variety of tools such as water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions, agriculture and livelihoods training, maternal child health and nutrition practices, and good governance.

We support increasing the flexibility for FFP non-emergency assistance to make commodities an option, rather than a requirement. This allows for the most effective form of aid for non-emergency assistance – whether it is U.S. sourced food, food produced or procured locally, or market-based assistance – to save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen communities’ resilience to chronic challenges and sudden crises. We continue to support the emergency programs of Food for Peace Title II without alteration.

McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition

The McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program recently marked its 20th anniversary last year, marking two decades of success in alleviating childhood hunger and fostering literacy worldwide. Since 2002, McGovern-Dole has reached over 31 million children in 48 countries with nutritious school meals. It is more than a school feeding program—it is a sustainable investment in communities. Further, its local and regional procurement component (LRP) helps develop local economies by purchasing food from local farmers.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization required that 10% of McGovern-Dole funds be used for LRP. **We support updating McGovern-Dole Food for Education’s local and regional procurement (LRP) component to a range of 10 to 20% and allow for capacity building activities for local farmers.** This will allow USDA more flexibility and help local farmers to successfully graduate out of U.S. assistance programs.

Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust

The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT) uses funding to purchase U.S. commodities to alleviate severe hunger and malnutrition in times of extraordinary need. Last year the BEHT was unprecedentedly completely drawn down (\$282 million) due to the global food crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, with emergency food assistance going to Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. **We support replenishment of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust** in anticipation for emergencies this year given the continued global food crisis and pressure on the U.S. government for assistance.

Food for Progress

Food for Progress projects focus on improving agricultural productivity and expanding agricultural trade. USDA donates U.S. agricultural commodities which can be distributed as food or monetized by selling them locally to fund projects.

Food for Progress is funded not through appropriations, but from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). While there is no ceiling on how much the CCC may spend on commodities, there is a \$40 million limit on what CCC is allowed to spend on freight. This has remained unchanged since the program’s inception in the 1990’s. **We support increasing the freight ceiling from \$40 million to \$55 million.** We also support applying cargo preference to USDA international food aid programs in the same manner as those led by USAID.

Nutrition

While nutrition is a key component of International Food Aid programs such as Food for Peace Title II and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, it is critical that **nutrition be further prioritized** in these programs as rates of global hunger and malnutrition continue to rise. Malnutrition is the greatest threat to child survival worldwide, making children more susceptible to deadly infectious diseases and contributing to more child deaths than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

Research

We support reauthorization of the Farm Bill Research Title with robust funding for agricultural research activities that support innovation for improving agricultural production and sustainable, safe, and nutritious food systems. Support for research programs such as the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) should be reauthorized and given robust funding.

Climate Adaptation

We support advancing policies and funding for programs to enhance adaptation measures for smallholder farmers in lower income countries and communities to help reduce the negative impact of climate change on food systems. Support smallholder farmers to afford and adopt regenerative practices.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Adopting these recommendations in the Farm Bill will strengthen international food and nutrition programs to both help save lives and strengthen livelihoods, contributing to our shared goal of eliminating global hunger. They will also serve to demonstrate America's leadership in the world related to global food security and nutrition.

We look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days, an Initiative of FHI Solutions
Alliance to End Hunger
Bread for the World
Cantera Partners
Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA)
Congressional Hunger Center
Edesia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Global Child Nutrition Foundation
GrainPro Incorporated
Growing Hope Globally
The Hunger Project
Islamic Relief USA
Meds & Food for Kids
One Acre Fund
Opportunity International
Outreach Program
RESULTS
Rise Against Hunger
Save the Children